

III. Remarks

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in light of the above amendments and the following remarks. After the amendments detailed above, claims 1, 3-6 and 8-16 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 3-6, and 8-14 have been amended, and claims 15 and 16 have been maintained in their previous form.

A. Discussion of Amended Independent Claims

Claim 1

Claim 1 was rejected as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,212,524 to Weissman et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,212,515 to Rogers. The rejection is moot, as claim 1 has been amended. However, neither Weissman nor Rogers, either singularly or in combination, teaches “providing a flag with at least one star of the plurality of stars, each flag indicating the availability of its associated star.” Additionally, neither Weissman nor Rogers teaches “evaluating the availability of the one or more stars of the selected stargroup by reviewing their associated flags.” Therefore, amended claim 1 is patentably distinct from the cited prior art. As claims 3-5 depend from and further limit independent claim 1, these claims are now in condition for allowance as well.

Claims 6 and 11

Claim 6 was also rejected over Weissman and Rogers. Claim 6 has been amended to correspond to amended claim 1. Therefore, the above remarks with respect to amended claim 1 similarly apply to amended claim 6. Claim 11 was additionally rejected over Weissman and Rogers. However, neither Weissman nor Rogers teaches a star “having an associated flag for indicating availability of the star” as claimed in amended claim 11. Accordingly, amended claims 6 and 11 are now in condition for allowance. As claims 8-10 and 12-16 depend from and further limit independent claims 6 and 11, respectively, these claims are now in condition for allowance as well.

B. Conclusion

Applicant notes that the formal drawings of Figs. 10 and 11 were inadvertently excluded from the set of formal drawings filed on September 25, 2001. Applicant hereby submits the formal drawings for Figs. 10 and 11.

A check in the amount of \$770 is enclosed to accommodate the fees for filing the RCE. If any additional fees are required to complete this filing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge those fees, or credit any overpayment, to Account No. 13-0480, Attorney Docket No. 68146988.710.

If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Amendment and Response to Final Office Action or the Application in general, Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' attorney at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,



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